

Francis Preston Blair to Andrew Jackson, December 22, 1844, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

class=MsoNormal>FRANCIS P. BLAIR TO JACKSON.

Washington, December 22, 1844.

My Dear General: . . . I have known long that Calhoun would leave no stone unturned to supplant and destroy me. When he first formed the design, before delegates to the late Dem: National Convention at Balt. 0371 347 were elected, to prevent the organization of that body, he sent Rhett with articles for the Globe, putting the mode of choosing delegates on a plan totally different from that practised in most of the States; and insisting that unless they were appointed on his plan, the Democracy ought not to abide by its decision. I refused to lend myself to this scheme of defeating the organization of our party and setting the presidency up at auction in the House of Reps. Calhoun and Rhett then took their measures without me, and from that time have meditated what they now hope to accomplish through the power of the President they would willingly have defeated if they could—to whose nomination they contributed nothing until it was made unanimously by Mr. Van Buren's friends upon the suggestion and assurance of my partner Mr. Rives, to the Maine and New Hampshire delegates before the Convention met in the morning of the day of his nomination, that the Globe would cordially support him. I have done so disinterestedly and zealously from personal as well as party attachments and could continue to do so upon the principles which he has avowed and the measures the Democracy demand. But it is just and proper that he should choose his own Organ; and if he should think another better suited to his views than the Globe, you may rest assured that I shall not complain of it; nor make a factious opposition to him on that account.

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I think I could give the world an instance of an editor, devoted to the true interests of the Cause, who could pursue it, although divorced from the counsels of the administration charged with its management. Still to such men as Calhoun, whom I know well to be capable of sacrificing the party, the Union—the country itself to selfish ambition, I should feel no hesitation in speaking my mind, no matter to what shelter they might betake themselves. I should always feel that I was doing good service to Democracy and the country in countervailing their attempts to take the control of public offices. I see a correspondent (from this city) of the Charleston Mercury (I presume Rhett who is a relative of the Editor) says that it is quite uncertain whether Mr. Calhoun would take office under Col. Polk, that it would certainly be no addition to Mr. C. to be associated with the President in this way, but that it would make the latter immediately “lustrous” to have Mr. C. near him. If Mr. C. and his friends seek a commanding place in the councils of the Chief Magistrate, with such overweening arrogance, what could be expected of them after getting it? What could be expected of the man, who in a place without power, sought to supplant you in the Presidency at the close of the first term—and worse, to deprive you of the good opinion of your countrymen? I do hope, whatever ill opinion the partizans of Calhoun may infuse into the mind of the President elect, in regard to me, that he may yet be wise enough to trust them no further.

Benton’s course, I have reason to think will be changed in regard to the Texas question the moment it falls into the hands of the President and the Congress chosen to dispose of it. For my part, I have urged and I shall continue to urge reannexation at once for fear of accidents, 0372 348 although I would rather reserve the glory of it for Mr. Polk. I suggested to Ingersoll the putting it, as you advise, on the Louisiana treaty, and for this purpose to bring on a resolution as brief as this “Resolved (Texas assenting) that it be and it is hereby reannexed to the United States. Under Col. Polk’s auspices Benton would support this I am sure. I think he as well as all Mr. Van Buren’s friends from the extreme of the north to the far west will cordially support the new administration now coming in as you suggest without identifying itself with rivals for the Presidency. Indeed

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this is what all the well wishers of the Cause and Col. Polk desire. They want him as you say he will exert “energy to give himself elbow room” to conduct the public affairs in his own way unsupported or I would rather say unclogged by the weight of presidential aspirants. You may rely upon it that under such circumstances he will have the cordial cooperation of all the strong men, the honest men of the party with whom I have been in the habit of corresponding—and mine, even if disabled by his own act to serve him effectively.

In my last letter I told you in reply to your wish to know how much Mr. Rives and myself would want of Andrews loan, that we did not, do not, and shall not want any of it—that your convenience must alone be consulted. The seasons and the prices of cotton coming round to make it easy must govern the payment.

My love and my wife’s and the congratulations of the Season attend you. I am however engaged to propose the congratulations of your city friends for you and may, therefore, save my weak voice to join the general chorus.

Your affectionate frnd